

## Achilles Street Landlord Offer

Since 2016, Lewisham Council has been working with residents on the Achilles Street Estate to look at the best way to deliver new council owned homes for social rent, to improve the current homes of all the current council tenants and resident leaseholders and to enhance the public and green spaces and the spaces available for local businesses and community uses.

We think the best way to do this is to take forward a comprehensive redevelopment of the current estate to deliver an increased number of new council homes and provide brand new high-quality homes for all of the current council tenants and resident leaseholders.

This Landlord Offer document explains how the proposals for the estate will work and what they will mean for you and your family. We think that this offer means that the redevelopment will benefit and sustain the fantastic local community that already exists on the current estate by giving a safe, secure future for current and future residents.

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## **The design of the new Achilles Street Estate**

From the start of 2016 through to spring 2017 the Council worked with residents to look at the best way to provide new homes and improve the homes for existing residents on the Achilles Street Estate. The development of the draft designs for the new estate really benefited from the feedback and suggestions we got from estate residents and local people at four public consultation events and individual meetings that were held. The architecture team was made up of Karakusevic Carson Architects, Bell Philips Architects and 5<sup>th</sup> Studio Architects.

By spring 2017, the draft designs demonstrated that if the whole estate was redeveloped, we could provide new, modern high-quality homes for all current residents, as well as additional new social homes to help address the housing crisis and private homes to help to fund the redevelopment. Importantly, these designs also demonstrated that some of the issues reported to us by residents including issues with traffic, parking, the quality of public spaces on the estate and accessibility could also be fixed.

However, there are two key parts of the 2017 draft design that we think can be improved.

### **The edge of Fordham Park**

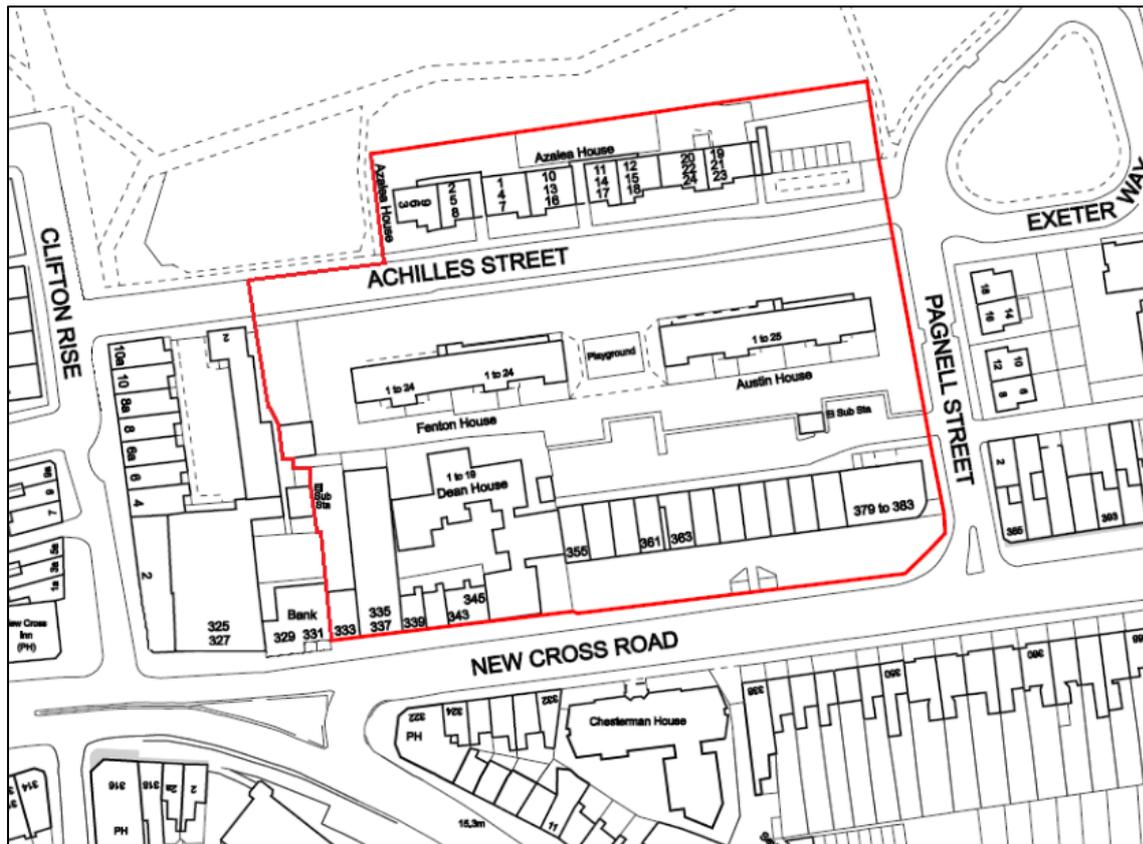
The 2017 draft design aimed to open up the park more to residents on the Achilles Street Estate, by building the new buildings slightly into the park, and making new park spaces between the new buildings. This approach meant that there was no net loss of park space, and although it would have resulted in the loss of some trees, more new trees would have been planted.

However, we no longer think this is the best approach, and we want to limit the loss of existing trees as much as possible. Instead we want to work closely with you to re-design how the boundary of Fordham Park works with the boundary of the new estate, so that we can provide excellent public green space and an excellent new estate while minimising the impact on the environment.

### **The businesses along Clifton Rise**

The 2017 design also included all of the businesses along Clifton Rise, as it was considered a good opportunity to provide improved commercial spaces for businesses with new homes above them. However, based on the delays and the cost of purchasing all of those individual businesses it was decided that this was not an efficient use of public money at this time as it did not deliver many new social homes. The Council wrote to all of the businesses, and the BWA Islamic Centre, on Clifton Rise on the 31<sup>st</sup> July 2019 to confirm that we are no longer including their premises in the current Achilles Street Estate redevelopment.

The redline plan below shows the areas we are now considering for redevelopment:



### Choosing an architect to design the new Achilles Street Estate

To re-look at the design issues above, and to carry out the detailed technical design we need to appoint a new design team. We think that finalising the design of the new estate may take about 12 months, and will involve lots of opportunities for you to help shape the future of the Achilles Street Estate.

One of the most important ways you can influence the future of the estate is to be involved in choosing the architect who will be doing the design work. To do this Achilles Street residents will form a representative steering group that will work with the Council through the procurement process to pick a new architect, and will nominate representatives to attend design meetings as the plans for the estate come together.

If Achilles Street Estate residents vote **yes** to support the redevelopment proposals, we would move quickly to start the procurement process to pick a new architect.

### What the new Achilles Street Estate will look like

While the final detail is still be decided on there are some key principles that were established in the previous design work that will remain part of the future design work:

- All current council tenants and resident leaseholders will have new modern high quality homes
- We will build extra council homes for social rent
- We will build private homes to help to pay for the redevelopment

- We will improve parking and traffic management on the estate
- We will provide better security
- We will provide better public and green spaces
- We will provide better play space for children
- We will provide more space for local businesses

Based on the design work that has been completed so far, we think that around 450 homes in total could be built on the Achilles Street Estate, although this number will be finalised through the design process.

We are aiming to maximise the number of these new homes that will be council owned homes for social rent. 50% of the total homes built will be affordable, and a minimum of 35% of the total homes built will be council owned homes for social rent with an aim to increase the number of social rented homes by as much as possible.

If 450 homes are built, they will include:

- 49 homes for current council tenants on the Achilles Street Estate with social rents set as if they hadn't moved, i.e. the same rent level
- 20 homes for current resident leaseholders on the Achilles Street Estate should they chose to remain
- 109 - the minimum number of new council owned homes for social rent with rents set at London Affordable Rent
- 47 homes that we would aim to also make council owned homes for social rent, but may also be other affordable homes such as Shared Ownership or London Living Rent depending on viability
- 225 private homes to help to pay for the redevelopment, but there may also be additional affordable homes such as Shared Ownership or London Living Rent

### **What the new homes will be like**

We will build the new Achilles Street Estate in phases, so that current residents only need to move once, straight from their current homes into their brand new homes.

We will help all residents with the move into their new homes, and there will be dedicated support available for older people and vulnerable residents.

All of the new homes will:

- Have better energy efficiency, thermal insulation, noise insulation and ventilation than existing properties, so your bills will be lower
- Have high safety standards, all homes will include sprinklers
- Have level access and new, modern lifts, so no-one will need to climb stairs to get to their home
- Be the right size for families that live in them
- Meet or exceed building standards, and be built with quality materials.
- Have access to outdoor space with balconies and/or communal gardens
- Have access to new, secure play space for children

## **Choices**

Each resident will have the following choices for their new home:

- Separate or open plan kitchens and living rooms
- Kitchen finishes
- Floor coverings
- Bathroom tiling
- Paint colours

## **Parking**

The new Achilles Street Estate will have controlled parking, so that only people that are estate residents with parking permits or Blue Badges will be able to park there. This should help solve the parking problem on the current estate.

All council tenants and resident leaseholders who currently have a car will be entitled to a parking space on the new Achilles Street Estate. There will be a small annual administration fee (currently £12) for the permit.

## **Service Charges**

Service charges are based on the actual cost of managing and maintaining the estate.

We will design the new Achilles Street Estate so that it is as easy to maintain as possible so that service charges are kept as low as possible. However, one of the main aims of the new design is to provide more lifts, so that all of the new homes can be accessed without having to climb stairs, so this may mean there is a small increase in service charges. However, we think that overall you will pay less, because your energy bills will be lower due to the improved insulation and more efficient heating in new properties.

## **Council tenants on the Achilles Street estate**

All current council tenants on the Achilles Street Estate will be offered a brand new home on the rebuilt estate.

You will be offered a new home following a suitability assessment. In nearly all cases your new home will have the same number of bedrooms that your current home has. If you are currently over crowded you will be offered a larger home to meet your family's needs.

If you are currently in a bed-sit you will be offered a new one-bedroom home.

The current designs for the new Achilles Street Estate do not include four-bedroom or five-bedroom homes, so if your family needs more than three bedrooms we will work with you to make sure you are offered a suitable home on the new estate. If your overcrowded household includes other adult residents, we would look at options that include providing your family with two new council homes, which could be located next door to each other. The new home of the lead tenant (the tenant who is listed on your current tenancy agreement) will be for social rent set as if you hadn't moved, while any additional social home provided will be for social rent at London Affordable Rent levels.

If you are interested in down-sizing to a smaller property you will be entitled to an additional cash payment of £300 for each bedroom that you give up.

You will also be entitled to bid for a social home somewhere else in Lewisham if you want to move away from the Achilles Street Estate, and any tenant that wishes to do so will be given decant priority when bidding on Homesearch, the Council's choice based letting system. You will still be entitled to receive the compensation and moving costs as outlined below.

## **Rents**

As a current council tenant you will continue to pay rent levels as if you had not moved. This means that if you stay in the same size property your rent will not change because of the move and it will only increase by a small fixed percentage each year as usual.

If you move from a two-bedroom property into a three-bedroom property, your rent will increase, but only so that it will be what a three-bedroom would be rented for on the current estate. After that it will only increase by a small fixed percentage each year as usual.

If you move from a two-bedroom property into a one-bedroom property your rent will decrease to what a one-bedroom property would be rented for on the current estate. After that it will only increase by a small fixed percentage each year as usual.

If your overcrowded household includes other adult residents, and your family is offered more than one new council home, then the above applies to the current tenants. Any new tenancy to other adult residents will be a social rent set at London Affordable Rent levels.

## **Your Tenancy**

The Council will still be your landlord, and you will still have a secure lifetime tenancy.

Your Right to Buy will still apply in the new property.

## **Compensation and Moving Costs for Council Tenants**

All council tenants will be entitled to a statutory Home Loss compensation payment, which is currently £6,400 that will be paid when you move.

The Council will also cover all reasonable costs relating to moving including:

- Providing boxes and people to help with the move
- Covering the costs of reconnections
- Setting up mail forwarding to your new address

## **Families in temporary accommodation on the Achilles Street Estate**

If you are in temporary accommodation on the Achilles Street Estate and:

- the Council have accepted a duty to house you before the date that this Landlord Offer is published,
- and you have not moved into alternative suitable housing before new homes are built on the estate,

You will also be offered a new council owned home for social rent on the new Achilles Street Estate that is suitable for your needs.

If you are in temporary accommodation on the Achilles Street Estate and the Council have accepted a duty to house you before the date that this Landlord Offer is published, you will also be offered a new council owned home for social rent on the new Achilles Street Estate that is suitable for your needs if you .

The Council will be your landlord and you will be given a secure lifetime tenancy when you move into your new council home.

If you do not wish to live on the new Achilles Street Estate you will be able to bid for a social home elsewhere in Lewisham.

### **Moving Costs for families in temporary accommodation**

The Council will cover all reasonable costs relating to moving into a new property on the Achilles Street Estate including:

- Providing boxes and people to help with the move
- Covering the costs of reconnections
- Setting up mail forwarding to your new address

### **The offer we are making to resident leaseholders on the Achilles Street estate**

All resident leaseholders who wish to will be guaranteed to remain part of the community on the new Achilles Street Estate, regardless of their financial circumstances.

You qualify as a resident leaseholder if you have lived in your property on the Achilles Street Estate as your primary residence for more than a year on the date that this offer document is published.

As a resident leaseholder we will pay you the independently assessed market value of your current home. We will also pay you a statutory Home Loss compensation payment of 10% of the agreed value of your home.

To get your new home on the rebuilt estate you will need to transfer the money we have paid you for your current property, and any mortgage you may currently have into your new home. You will only have to contribute your 10% statutory Home Loss compensation payment if this equity equates to less than 50% of the equity in your new home. You will need to purchase the maximum equity share that you are able to in the new property.

We will provide an independent financial adviser to work with you during this process, who can help out if any new mortgage applications are required.

Any remaining unpurchased equity in the new property will be held by the Council but no rent will be charged for this share.

There is no obligation to buy this extra equity share from the Council in the future, but you are able to do so if you want to.

This means that you will not have to invest any extra money to get a new property on the rebuilt Achilles Street Estate and in return you will receive a brand new home.

If you want to sell your home in the future, the price you receive will be split with the Council based on the proportion of equity that you own.

If you want to downsize, we can offer you a smaller property than your current home.

You are entitled to take the independently assessed market value of your current home, plus the 10% statutory Home Loss compensation payment and use this money to purchase a home independently off of the Achilles Street estate.

In cases where the financial adviser considers that continuing in home ownership would place too much of a financial burden on any resident leaseholder, the Council will offer resident leaseholders a council tenancy on the rebuilt estate.

### **Moving Costs for resident leaseholders**

In addition to 10% of the market value of your current home as compensation, the Council will also cover all reasonable costs relating to moving and purchasing a new property including:

- Legal fees
- Valuation costs
- Providing boxes and people to help with the move
- Covering the costs of reconnections
- Setting up mail forwarding to your new address

### **Details of how residents can help guide the design process going forward**

#### **Resident Steering Group**

We want all the residents on the Achilles Street Estate to be part of the design process, and construction process for the new estate. A representative Resident Steering Group will be formed, made up of people who live on the estate to shape decisions about:

- what the new estate will look like
- the design of the new homes
- the design of the public and green spaces
- what community facilities could be included

The Resident Steering Group will be a key part of picking the new architect to work on the new designs, and will also have representatives that attend design team meetings with the Council and the architects.

Training will be provided with Lewisham Homes to help members of the steering group learn about the development process.

When the construction process starts, the Resident Steering Group will also be able to set standards that the builders will have to maintain, to ensure that the disruption on the estate is as small as possible.

## Ongoing Engagement

Throughout the design process and the entire development process we want to make sure that all residents on the Achilles Street Estate are kept up to date and have opportunities to contribute at all stages. There will be regular update letters sent to all residents and public engagement events throughout the design process so that all local people can see how the designs are progressing.

## The Ballot

### How the Ballot works

In 2018 the Mayor of London introduced new guidance on estate regeneration projects across all London Boroughs. As part of this guidance, a resident's ballot must now be held for estate regeneration projects over a certain size, where GLA funding is required. The ballot will ask whether residents who are eligible to vote agree with the estate regeneration proposal detailed in a landlord offer document.

This ensures that all residents who are eligible to vote are able to have their say on the future of the estate.

### Who is eligible to vote in the Ballot?

The Greater London Authority (GLA) and the Mayor of London have set the rules of who is eligible to vote. The ballot must be open to all residents aged 16+ on the estate as long as they fall into one or more of the following categories:

- Any resident who is a permanent resident on the estate and who has been on the Local Authority housing register for at least one year prior to the date this Landlord Offer is published.
- Social tenants (including those with secure, assured, flexible or introductory tenancies) named as a tenant on a tenancy agreement dated to the date this Landlord Offer is published.
- Resident leaseholders or freeholders who have been living in their properties as their only principle home for at least one year prior to the date this Landlord Offer is published and are named on the lease or freehold title for their property.

If you are eligible to vote in the Resident Ballot you are considered to be an eligible resident.

### Who will run the ballot?

Eligible residents will be contacted directly by **Electoral Reform Services (ERS)** who will manage the registration and ballot process. The eligibility criteria for the ballot is set by the GLA and not by Lewisham Council or by ERS.

ERS has been managing ballots for organisations (including the NHS, Trade Unions and Local Authorities) since 1988. Their earliest recorded ballot dates back to 1898 when ERS assisted the Northumberland Mineworkers Union.

As the independent scrutineer, they have been appointed to ensure that the ballot is run securely, independently and in line with the GLA guidance.

ERS will securely post the ballot papers to residents, receive and count the votes, verify that they have been cast legitimately and issue the result.

### **What is the question on the ballot paper?**

Eligible residents will receive a ballot paper asking you to answer YES or NO to the question:

*Are you in favour of the proposal for the regeneration of the Achilles Street Estate?*

### **How do I vote?**

Using one of the methods below – you cannot cast more than one vote.

- Post the completed ballot paper back to ERS in the pre-paid envelope provided.
- Vote online at [www.ersvotes.co.uk/XXXX](http://www.ersvotes.co.uk/XXXX) using the security codes listed on your ballot paper.

As this is a secret ballot, ERS will never tell Lewisham Council, or anyone else, how you voted.

### **When will I get my ballot paper and when will the vote close?**

Ballot Papers will be sent out to all eligible residents on **XX/XX/XX** in **first class/special delivery** envelopes. You can cast your vote as soon as your ballot paper arrives.

The ballot closes at 5pm on **XX/XX/XX**

If you are sending your ballot paper back in the post it must have arrived at ERS by this time in order to be counted. Please make sure you send your vote back with plenty of time to arrive as any ballot papers received after the close will not be counted under any circumstances.

### **When will I find out the result?**

The result will be announced **Insert information on how the result will be announced and when.**

### **Who can I contact for further information about the ballot?**

If you want more information on how the ballot will work, if you have not received your ballot paper or if you have lost or damaged it, you can contact ERS on the details below.

ERS is totally independent from the estate regeneration project and Lewisham Council. They can only provide information on the administration of the ballot.

Be sure to quote the name of your estate or Lewisham Council when you get in touch.

T: 02088899203 Email: [CustomerServices@electoralreform.co.uk](mailto:CustomerServices@electoralreform.co.uk)

### **Key Ballot Dates**

Landlord Offer Published	TBC
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Ballot Starts	TBC
Ballot Closes	TBC
Results Announced	TBC

### **Timeframes for the Achilles Street Redevelopment**

Before a development has achieved planning permission and builder has been appointed it's difficult to give exact timeframes, but we will keep all of the Achilles Street Estate residents up to date as we work through the development process.

If residents vote to support the redevelopment process we think:

- it could take about 4 months to appoint a new design team
- we think it will then take around 12 months to complete the design work and make a planning application
- then it will take around 9 months to get planning permission for the new estate
- then it will take about 3 months to appoint a main contractor to start the building works
- each phase will then take around 2 years to build, and we think that we can build the new Achilles Street Estate in three main phases

### **Contact Us**

If you have any questions about this Landlord Offer document or require it in a different language or an accessible format please contact:

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